

Town of Andover Board of Health Policy on Pesticide Use

Prepared by the Town of Andover
Pesticide Reduction Task Force, July 2003

The Pesticide Reduction Task Force is a group of residents, members of organizations, Town staff, educators, scientists and managers working together to raise awareness of, and educate the community about, the dangers of pesticides widely used on lawns and gardens, and to promote natural, organic alternatives. The Task Force commits itself to the goal of reduction of pesticide use in the Town of Andover, on both public and private property.

SECTION 1: STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Town of Andover agrees with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) “all pesticides are toxic to some degree..., and the commonplace, widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue.”¹

The Town of Andover Board of Health recognizes that all citizens, (particularly children and those with compromised health), and other inhabitants of our natural environment, have a right to protection from exposure to pesticides (as defined in Section 2).

The Town of Andover Board of Health recognizes that a balanced ecosystem and safe water supply are vital to the health of the town and its citizens; and as such are also in need of protection from exposure to pesticides.

Furthermore, the Town of Andover Board of Health recognizes that it is in the best interest of public health to reduce the use of pesticides on Town-owned land; to encourage residents to reduce pesticide use on private property; and to introduce and promote natural, organic cultural and management practices to prevent and, when necessary, control pest problems on Town-owned land, and instruct residents on similar options on private property.

SECTION 2: PESTS AND PESTICIDES DEFINED

For the purpose of this policy, pests and pesticides are defined as follows: **Pests** are and may be known as undesirable plants, insects, fungi, bacteria, and rodents, birds and other animals. Common examples in regional turf grass and the landscape can be, but are not limited to, crabgrass, knotweed, poison ivy, chinch bugs, grubs, and a variety of plant pathogens.

Pesticides are defined by the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture Pesticide Bureau as “substances or mixtures of substances that prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate pests, or defoliate, desiccate, or regulate plants.”² Pesticides are poisonous substances that can have an adverse effect on the environment or impair human health...”³ Herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, miticides, avicides and rodenticides are all considered pesticides.

Pesticides classified as known, likely, or probable human carcinogens or probable endocrine disruptors, or those pesticides that meet the criteria for Toxicity Category I or Toxicity Category II, as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Act (EPA) in section 156.10 of Part 156 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations are all considered subject to this policy. A list of the pesticides in the EPA’s Toxicity Categories I and II will be periodically updated and maintained at the offices of the Town of Andover Board of Health.

SECTION 3: BOARD OF HEALTH STATEMENT ON PESTICIDES

Whereas pesticides are by nature poisons and exposure, even at low levels, may cause serious adverse health effects; and

Whereas, due to a variety of physiologic and age-related factors, children are at increased risk of cancer, neuro-behavioral impairment and other health problems as a result of their exposure to pesticides; and

Whereas, many of the ingredients in pesticide products, alone and in combination, are not tested for their long-term toxic effects on the brain and nervous systems, the endocrine system, or the immune system; nor have they been tested with the unique vulnerability of children in mind; and

Whereas, in addition to their intended effects, pesticides can also harm non-target organisms (such as humans, pets, beneficial insects, aquatic and other wildlife) and the environment; and

Whereas according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) all pesticides are toxic to some degree, and the commonplace, widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue,⁴ and represents a threat to our drinking water supply; and

Whereas the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency believes that most pesticides, despite having an EPA registration, have not been adequately tested to determine their effects on people or the environment;⁵ and

Whereas, it is in the best interest of community health for all residents to learn about the hazards of pesticides, and to adopt alternative techniques and approaches to all pest-related problems:

Now therefore, The Board of Health for the Town of Andover hereby commits itself to the goal of reduction of pesticide use in the Town of Andover, both on public and private property.

SECTION 4: STATEMENT OF ACTION

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health will appoint a town wide Pesticide Use Reduction Task Force to implement and expand a public education and awareness campaign to reduce pesticide use in Andover; and

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health will require the public school administration and the town administration that maintains school playing fields to submit copies of the school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans required by the Children and Family Protection Act, to the Board of Health on an annual basis; and additionally, all other organizations using any other municipal playing fields shall adhere to the same standards established in the school IPM plans.

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health will cosponsor and promote natural organic lawn care practices via public seminars to raise public awareness regarding the benefits of natural organic lawn care to the environment and to public health; and

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health will discourage the use of pesticides that are harmful to the environment and public health on both public and private property; and

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health will encourage collaboration among the various town departments (i.e. Conservation Commission, Municipal Maintenance, Recreation, etc.) and sports associations regarding the decision to apply pesticides on town-owned and leased property, and regarding implementation of a system of notification and signage when playing fields are treated; and

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health, realizing that the town's drinking water surface supply is a fragile environmental and economic resource, will coordinate expanded watercourse testing for pesticide contamination in the Watershed Protection Overlay District; and

Therefore, the Andover Board of Health, in order to sustain an effective Pesticide Use Reduction Program, will seek funding for ongoing data collection and analysis of pesticide use and the impacts of pesticide use within the town; and

Therefore, the long-range objective of the Andover Board of Health is to reduce the exposure of children and adults to pesticides and pesticide breakdown products which are known or probable health hazards, to protect Andover's water supply, and to protect the environmental health of Andover's land resources.

SECTION 5: REFERENCES

1. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, "Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment, June 1992.
2. Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Pesticide Bureau Regulations, 333 CMR:203, Sec. 4, 1996.
3. Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Pesticide Bureau, Regulation Home Page, www.massdfa.org/pestreg.htm, March 2000.
4. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment" Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, June 1992.
5. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, February 1993, "Lawn Care Pesticides White Paper", Appendix VI p.lxxiii

ADDENDUM 1:

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (DEFINED)

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an ecologically-sound approach to suppressing and eliminating pest populations to keep them from causing health, economic, or aesthetic injury. IPM utilizes site-specific information about pest biology and behavior, environmental conditions, and the dynamics of human characteristics and activities in dealing with the prevention and control of pests that interfere with the purpose and use of a particular site.

Organic Pest Management (OPM) strives first and foremost to prevent pest problems through the application of natural, organic horticultural and maintenance practices. OPM can incorporate some of the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in its program as is deemed suitable and necessary by the OPM Advisory Committee.

The following steps outline the basic approach used in an IPM program.

- Monitoring and scouting the turf or landscape in question;
- Accurate record-keeping documenting any potential pest problems;
- Evaluation of the site with regard to any injury caused by a pest in question and a determination made on which course of treatment to follow;
- Chosen treatment to be least damaging to the general environment and one that best preserves the natural ecosystem;
- Chosen treatment to be the most likely to produce long-term reductions in pest control requirements. The effective implementation must be operationally feasible, and must be cost effective in the short and long term.
- Chosen treatment must minimize negative impact to non-target organisms;
- Chosen treatment must be the least disruptive of natural controls available;

- Chosen treatment must be the least hazardous to human health.
- Fields should be posted with the date and type of pesticide application, and the Superintendent of Grounds notified of any such treatment.

ADDENDUM 2:

PESTICIDE REDUCTION TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Maria Bartlett

Maureen Denison

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